

Mrs. Thoresen Freed In Husband's Death

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — Mrs. Louise Thoresen was acquitted today of murder charges in the death of her millionaire gun collector husband, William Thoresen III.

The eight-man, four-women jury returned their verdict just 11 hours after they got the case from Judge Joseph J. Joy.

The judge convened court at 3:45 a.m. when the jury reached a verdict, and the court clerk read it aloud.

MRS. THORESEN was joyfully embraced by her parents in the courtroom. The 34-year-old defendant was not set free, however, since she is being held on a New York warrant involving a gun charge.

But Mrs. Thoresen was expected to be released later today. She was found innocent after a 13-day trial.

Mrs. Thoresen's husband, son of a Chicago steel executive, was shot to death in the couple's Fresno home last June 10.

In his summation, Deputy Dist. Atty. Frank Wells showed the jury color photos of the bullet-riddled back of the victim. The holes were close together. Wells commented:

"That, ladies and gentlemen, is

known as a good group. To get that kind of group you have to aim, and that takes time."

KENNETH DEVANEY, one of Mrs. Thoresen's lawyers, talked to the jury while beating the floor with a riding crop he said Thoresen used to beat his wife. Said DeVaney:

"Either Louise Thoresen is guilty of murder in the first degree or she is not guilty. We say she is not guilty."

Thoresen, said DeVaney, "was a madman, a sick man, a depraved man."

The prosecution had argued throughout the trial that Mrs. Thoresen killed her husband for the rest of her husband's estate and the love for another man, and that she ended Thoresen's life while he slept.

THE DEFENSE contended Thoresen committed repeated attacks on his wife, and toward the end became "like an animal that gives warning before it strikes" and had so warned his wife before he was killed.

Defense lawyer James Shepard told the defense version of why his client killed her husband:

"She was standing there by the bed with two broken ribs and a punctured ear drum" from a beating administered earlier.

"She could hardly raise her left arm. . . . I don't know what you would have done but I have my own thought in the matter."



Acquitted

MRS. LOUISE THORESEN is reunited with her parents, MR. and MRS. JOSEPH BANICH, following her acquittal of all charges in the June 10 shooting of her husband in Fresno, Calif. (AP Wirephoto.)